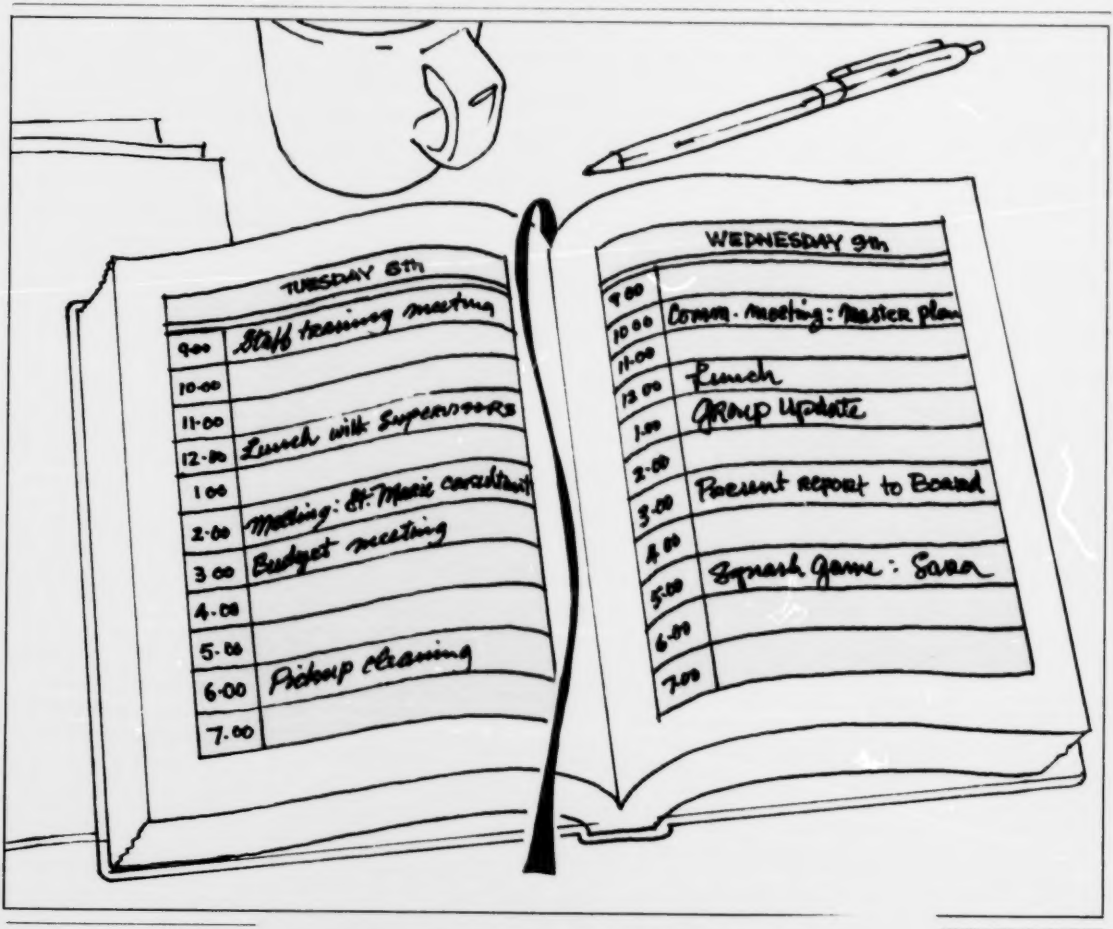
RECREATION

Making a Difference

A MANAGER'S GUIDE TO ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE



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PREFACE

> The art of progress is to preserve order
> amid change and change amid order.
> -Whitehead

This book is an attempt to further progress, by introducing order to the confusion facing recreation managers attempting to respond to change. The book is neither an attempt to "sell" change nor a "how-to" book. Rather, it is a book on how to think about organizational change. Every situation is different -- every manager needs to be his/her own architect.

In the past ten years in Ontario there has been considerable thought on social trends and their effect on recreation. In 1976 a group of Ontario recreationists met at Elora to discuss the future of recreation and decided unanimously that recreation had not been keeping up with the sweeping changes being experienced as the post-industrial age and that "the concept of recreation as it was practiced was bankrupt."[1]

Tom Goodale, in a follow-up report to the conference, identified the problem of dependency and passivity in the midst of major change.

> "Somehow the dependency cycle has to be broken if individuals, families and communities are to grow in self-definition and self-reliance. . . . If we cannot break the cycle of dependency and if our activities stimuate more dependency, not less, then we likely will experience more and costlier government programs, larger and less efficient government, more laws, regulations and restraints. . ."[2]

From the standpoint of 1985, most observers would agree with Goodale and the other participants at Elora that massive change is happening in our society. We are revising basic understandings about how the world works. Our beliefs about authority, the role of women, our economic future and the role of government are all undergoing profound changes.

Just as the field of recreation must change and evolve, so must the methods of changing organizations evolve in response to these trends.

What do these trends mean for managers and staff as they manage change?

1. Facing constant change means that organizations need to be learning, analyzing and understanding what is happening in the environment.

2. Organizations need to be able to change and adapt without undue chaos or pain to clients and staff. This means building a climate which stimulates learning throughout the organization.

3. A breakdown of traditional authority means that leaders need to respond to the expectation of participation on the part of their staff and community.

4. As women reach positions of leadership in organizations, traditional patriarchal styles of leadership will need to be revised.

5. Shrinking budgets mean that change must be increasingly cost-conscious.

For the past eight years Paul Kemp and the staff of the City of Nepean Recreation Division have been dealing with these trends as they engaged in an organization development process and moved toward a community development approach of delivering service. This book uses as its illustration, the story of the changes that have been happening at Nepean.

We now turn to an overview discussion of the process of making the change you envisage come true.

Organizational Change: An Overview

As a result of the continuous attempts of managers to cope with the demands of social change, there has recently been considerable energy devoted to understanding how organizations change. The best of this writing discusses new ways of managing change that respond to the real shifts that are occurring in staff and community expectations. They assume a future that is going to be different from the present and that the way to meet that future is with a well-managed process which engages staff, clients and funders in creating the unique organization that responds to their particular needs.

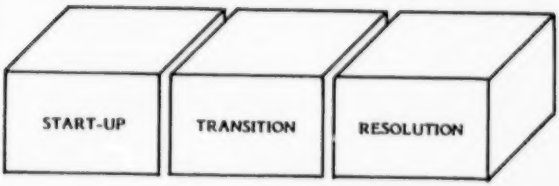
Broadly speaking, it is possible to categorize these changes as:

a) **program** - this type of change is usually a reaction to the changing market. Organizations re-program when existing services are no longer in demand. At such a time an organization needs to re-think its mandate, its services, staff, facilities, even its clientele.

b) **process** - this type of change is generally intended to change the quality of relationships, ways of managing or, more broadly the culture. This kind of change has been stimulated by staff desire for more democratic management forms as well as the popularity of such books as The Art of Japanese Management,[3] and In Search of Excellence.[4] Both these books were national best sellers and stressed the importance of positive organizational culture and the crucial role of the attitudes of every staff person in the organization.

c) **structural** - this is concerned with changing the structure of the organization by decentralizing, reconfiguring teams or building some sort of matrix. This is generally done in order to be more responsive to communities, improve lateral relations between staff, or organize around a new set of tasks. Structural changes are temptingly simple but without attention to other kinds of change very little will happen.

Although it is helpful to divide change into these three categories, in many cases aspects of all three happen either simultanelously or sequentially.


START-UP
TRANSITION
RESOLUTION

Increasingly, as the world changes and we get better at managing change and even enjoying it, changes get larger and more significant. So much so that much of the literature refers to these types of changes as transitions or tranformations. Change in most organizations is no longer experienced as a gentle evolution or smooth development, but more akin to a transition from one step to another. Not surprisingly, we are beginning to learn that the skills of managing small scale change, (clearly envisioning the new state, controlling the process tightly, moving incrementally) are not necessarily applicable to inducing and guiding transitions.

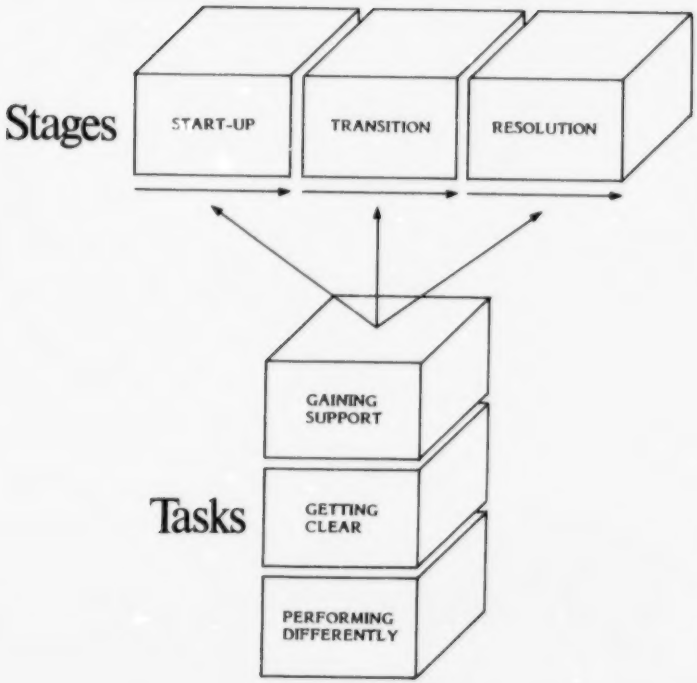
Organizational Transitions

Organizational transitions are not a rational, machine-like processes. For true transition to occur, individual human beings need to engage with the process, come to their own understandings and develop a new approach to the organization. What this means is that transitions are essentially unpredictable. They can be started and guided but how they will unfold is unknowable at the beginning. To quote a simple example of a physical transition: when we boil water, we can predict that a certain amount of heat will cause boiling, but we cannot predict which molecule will boil first.

Being unpredictable does not mean transformations are unmanageable. The process unfolds over time in three stages. The three stages are, start-up, transition and resolution.

Start-up is that period of excitement and uncertainty that occurs when a set of problems or opportunities begins to gain momentum. Typically, the problems and opportunities are seen differently by different actors, often with the largest number of the group believing that there is no need for change at all. For the change leader, this is a time of assessing readiness, promoting a vision of change, building alliances and perhaps getting a demonstration project underway.

The transition stage is the time of confusion that reigns when an organization has committed itself to change but is not clear what the change will look like, or who will be the winners and the losers. This is generally a time of ambivalence and conflict. Typically, the organization asks itself whether or not this is such a good idea. The change leader is concerned with managing a process of participative design to clarify the direction of the change, managing conflict and perhaps running some pilot projects to learn about the effects of the change in the real world.


Stages
START-UP
TRANSITION
RESOLUTION
Tasks
GAINING SUPPORT
GETTING CLEAR
PERFORMING DIFFERENTLY

Resolution refers to the process of institutionalizing the change - when doing things the new way becomes "the way things are done around here". In some ways this stage is the most chaotic and stressful because the change which made so much sense to the change leaders now has to live on its own in the hands of the staff. Inevitably there are foul-ups and unexpected snags. This is also the stage in which the full understanding of the change hits those affected by it. It may be a time of high resistance. The role of the leader is persistent clarifying, working with staff to help them adapt the change to their own style and ensuring there are rewards for changers.

To manage such complexity requires a framework which takes into account the paradoxical nature of the task - to be able to hang in, to be able to be flexible, to promote change, to maintain stability, to fight for clarity, to encourage diversity of opinions.

One way of reducing the complexity is to recognize the three major tasks that require attention throughout all three stages of the change. They are gaining support, getting clear and performing differently. Each task needs to be dealt with at each stage.

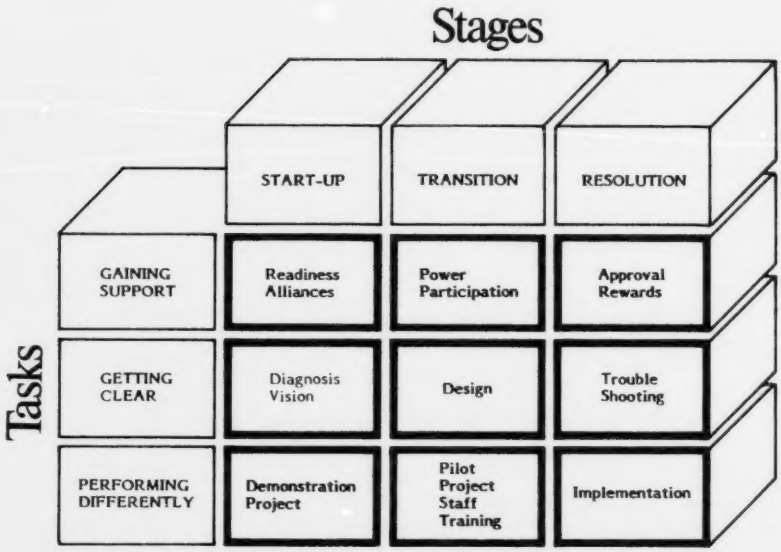
GAINING SUPPORT

The long-standing attention given to resistance to change is testimony to the importance of this task. The traditional answer to this problem has been to involve the people concerned in the change. This is still good advice but the more worldly literature of the past few years has also emphasized the importance of a clear understanding of the dynamics of power and conflict. For example, in one municipal situation we realized we needed a participative process, but we also needed a top-down political strategy which dealt with those in the organization who wanted to take over the process for their own goals.

Getting support requires the realization that people have a particular way of operating that makes sense to them. They need more than a rational explanation from you in order to change.

GETTING CLEAR

This means specifying the dimensions of the change. It starts with a clear understanding of the problems that the change is trying to deal with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(diagnosis) and formulates a vision of how the situation could be improved. Typically this vision starts out being rather vague. For example, one recreation division concerned with relating to different neighborhoods in different ways decided that they would "decentralize". At the beginning it was unclear just what this would mean in terms of new jobs, distribution of authority and a lot of other details. The vision needs to evolve into greater detail (design). Eventually "getting clear" becomes the troubleshooting, debugging and evaluation associated with implementation. The important point is that change is by definition a temporary excursion into chaos or confusion. The change leader needs to constantly work with others to clarify the situation.

PERFORMING DIFFERENTLY

This means actually putting the change into operation. Teaching classes differently, decentralizing, charging for services . . . etc. This is not something that happens after the change process, it is an integral part of the process itself. It is often the time when the greatest resistance is felt. Typically the change does not work as expected and there is tremendous pressure to back off or give up. Essentially, this task is concerned with finding places to try the innovation where the odds are on your side and you can monitor the effects of the change at little cost.

This section has discussed three tasks of change leaders (gaining support, getting clear and performing differently). The nature of these tasks change over the three stages of change (start-up, transition and resolution). When these two ways of looking at change are combined we get the matrix shown opposite. To use this matrix, locate the stage of the change you are presently engaged in; look down the column. The boxes in that column will tell you the specific tasks required at that stage.

This "quick story" of the change process should provide an overview although it is brief to the point of oversimplification. The more detailed look at the process appears in the following sections. It includes examples from a successful change process undertaken by the Recreation Division of the City of Nepean.

NEPEAN

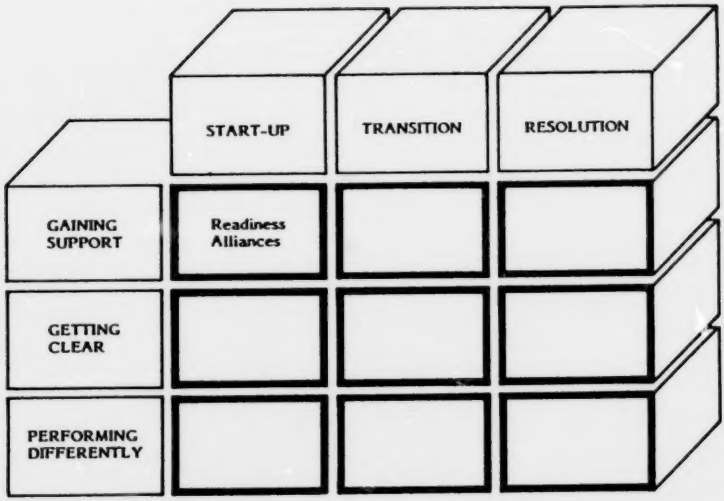
Nepean, situated on the outskirts of Ottawa, is a city of approximately 100,000 people. It is a relatively new city made up largely of middle class people, many of whom work either with the federal government or the growing high-tech industry.

The success of the change at Nepean is no accident - this section will include a discussion of how Nepean dealt with the challenges of each stage.

In 1977 Paul Kemp, the director of the Recreation Division, came to Nepean intending to implement a number of ideas which had grown out of his consulting and teaching experiences. The process has been a slow and well-supported movement toward three goals: interdivisional programming, community development and team building. What is most interesting about these changes is that they violate a number of expectations about large scale change.

- there has been little long-lasting conflict (although dramatic conflict did occur)
- the staff unanimously support the direction of the changes
- there has been very little structural change

In the early days of the change at Nepean, the strongest factor was the vision and commitment of the director. His challenge was to broaden the ownership of that vision. Although there were a number of changes going on outside the Recreation Division, he was not aided by a sense of crisis in the organization. At that time Nepean possessed one of the finest sports facilites in the country and program was seen as competently meeting the needs of the community.


START-UP
TRANSITION
RESOLUTION
GAINING SUPPORT
Readiness Alliances
GETTING CLEAR
PERFORMING DIFFERENTLY

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE:

THE INSIDE STORY

This section takes a more detailed look at the three stages of change (start-up, transition and resolution) and how these stages proceeded at the Recreation Division of the City of Nepean.

Start-up

Start-up is the period leading up to a change. It is evident to some that it is time for a change, there may be dissatisfaction, but whether or not sufficient momentum can be built for significant change is still a question.

Gaining Support

Getting support in this early stage is essentially two-fold: assessing readiness and building alliances.

Because organizations have limited energy to change, assessing whether the chances are good for a particular change at a particular time and place is important. There are five factors which help to evaluate readiness:

1) **Organizational difficulties** - Is there a pattern of difficulties that has the attention of the staff, council, clients?

2) **Vision** - Is there a vision of how the difficulties might be resolved?

3) **Resources** - Is time, energy, money and expertise available?

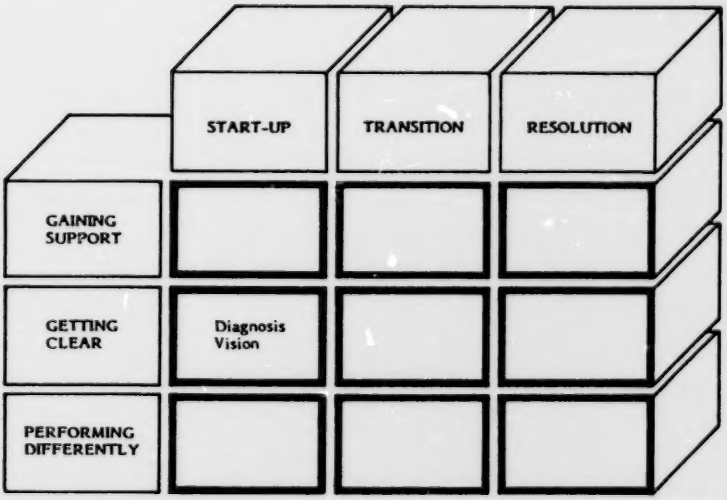
4) **Politics** - Does change have the support of a critical mass of influential actors?

5) **Committment of the change leaders** - Are the leaders prepared to lend their energy and expertise to the project and commit themselves to it for at least 2-3 years?

The other key task of this stage is an analysis of the power dimensions of the organization and, in particular, building a set of alliances. Saul Alinsky

NEPEAN

Not all allies need to be inside the organization. When Kemp came to Nepean he had important allies in the recreation community, at the then Ministry of Culture and Recreation and in college and university departments interested in Recreation. These networks were important in providing information, access to grant funds and ideas.



once said that a change agent on his own has all the importance of social dust. In organizations this seems to be doubly true. The difficulty with alliances is that they require trust - a trust that requires sharing of intentions and altering those intentions so that the alliance can present a broad united front. Key questions here are:

1) Who are your natural allies? Is there anything in your plan that they would have difficulties with?

2) Who has sufficient power to sink your plan if they are not on your side?

3) Who is likely to oppose you?

4) What aspects of your plan do you need to alter in order to atract and keep allies?

A last word on alliances - they take time and conversation to build and they require attention to maintain. Alliances also require clarity of intention from their members. Trust is built at least in some degree on understanding why the others are in the alliance.

Start-up/Getting Clear

Getting clear at the start-up stage of the change consists of diagnosis and vision.

Diagnosis is the job of getting a clear, shared picture of the situation in the organization. This is not a linear process but one in which you attend to a number of things simultaneously.

Good diagnosis depends on:

1) **Quality information** - this means gathering data in a variety of ways from a wide range of people inside and outside the organization. Many organizations hire consultants to interview people, administer questionnaires, hold public meetings or diagnostic workshops.

2) **A framework for the information** - the resource section contains several theories of what you should be looking for.

NEPEAN

At Nepean, the diagnosis and visioning work was spread over 5 years and served not only to generate clarity as to where the division was going, but also generated support for the new directions. The studies were all done collaboratively with significant political involvement. Four separate studies were done in the 5 year period. Three of the studies were done by outsiders with most of the funding coming from sources other than the city. These studies included a master plan, a survey of recreation needs and interests in Nepean and a study of working relationships inside the division.

By the end of the start-up stage at Nepean there was acceptance but little understanding of the vision. The goals at that stage were to move to a community development approach, become more flexible organizationally, and ultimately check the rising costs of recreation by involving the community in developing their own services and facilities. Recreation staff were to serve as facilitators and educators.

This framework may be a theory developed by someone else or it may simply be a list of what you believe to be important.

3) **Shared ownership of the diagnosis** - the analysis of the information must be done with the people with whom you hope to develop the change strategy. People will only act to solve problems that they believe in.

4) **Assembling the diagnosis** - after wading through the information and much conversation, main themes and central problems begin to appear. Eventually it should be possible to summarize the diagnosis in a list of points that can win agreement from the relevant actors.

The related dimension of getting clear at the start-up phase is building a vision of the future that responds to the diagnosis and generates hope that the change will deal with the situation faced by the organization. Typically visions are high on intuitive good sense and low on specificity. Examples are: decentralization, team management, community involvement.

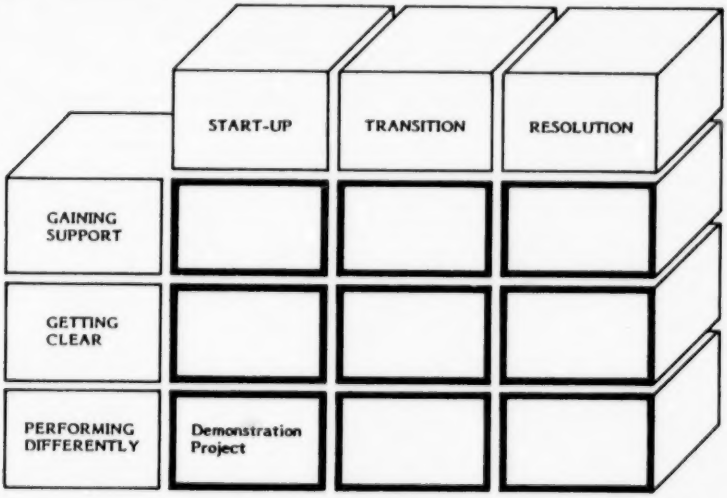
Based on a study done at City of Toronto, 4 characteristics of winning visions are: they are clear, not too different, have powerful sponsors, and don't cost too much.

Perhaps the most important question facing those who would create visions is: Will the vision be the product of one person who will then sell it to others or will it be developed collaboratively over time? This is a choice determined by the personal style of the change leader(s). Iaccocca at Crysler single-handedly fashioned a vision of future which he was able to sell to the staff, the public and the U.S. government. Roger Smith at General Motors developed a vision collaboratively after exhaustive staff work and innumerable executive conferences.

If the collaborative route is chosen, the process needs to be managed to ensure best use of time, best possible thinking and selection of the appropriate people.

It is important to note that a non-collaborative approach to visioning can take place as a prelude to a collaborative change process.

Although, to some extent community development was part of the Nepean approach to recreation, it did not attempt any pilot or demonstration projects at this stage of the change. Their energy seemed to be concentrated on the problem of getting clear.



NEPEAN

Although there was some confusion and conflict at Nepean, there seems to have been much less lasting conflict than one would expect. The main reasons seem to be the gradual approach to change and the emphasis placed on training and communication.

The change was not conflict-free. In the early days the conflict between those arguing for and against the change was bitter and, at times demoralizing. It may be that this conflict was due to interpersonal differences rather than ideological ones, but change certainly amplified conflict.

Start-up/Performing Differently

The task of performing differently is less prominent at start-up since much of the energy goes into planning and getting positioned for the change. There are, however, two types of action at this stage: demonstration projects and symbolic acts of change that communicate serious intent to the organization.

Looking first at demonstration projects, their essential role is to test the feasability of a particular approach or innovation. Leaders typically choose a setting for a demonstration project that has as many advantages as possible -- best staff, congenial setting. The second important aspect of demonstration projects is that they be "learn-by-doing" projects.

The other actions sometimes taken at the start-up phase are symbolically important acts of change that either capitalize on a crisis or specifically communicate that change is underway (i.e. the retirement or firing of senior staff, doing a major study of the organization).

TRANSITION

Transition is the period between the time the organization announces its intention to change and the resolution of the process. Transition is generally characterized by ambivalence, confusion, conflict and excitement as the organization struggles to develop new directions and secure the agreement of staff, clients, politicians.

In many respects the heart of the process is ambivalence. Many in organization may dispute the need for change; others may realize the need for change but disagree with the steps taken. This ambivalence leads to conflict which adds to the existing confusion of an organization struggling to move in new directions.

The conflict in turn leads to less communication as people begin talking only to those on their side. Decreased communication adds to the conflict and makes it more difficult for the organization to learn, thereby prolonging the confusion. This scenario is not inevitable but it is most often the case. In order to break this cycle there must be competent design activity which results in widely accepted solutions to the problem facing the organization. Dramatically increased communication is required to decrease confusion and fear of the future. It is important to note that for the powerful and well-placed, this may be a time of intense involvement and excitement.

NEPEAN

After gaining the support of the commissioner and the recreation committee, the change leaders worked to gain the support of the staff by a highly participative approach to managing and by pacing the change to be responsive to the receptivity of the staff.

Central to preparing staff for a community development approach was to loosen the organization so that staff worked more closely across sections. For example, programs such as "Pool Park" brought together the staff of the aquatics division with the playground staff to create a new program and a new set of working relationships.

A critical event in the history of the change was the promotion of a number of part-time people to full-time staff. Early in the transition, a supervisor resigned. Instead of replacing the supervisor, the funds were used to bring a number of part-time staff into full-time positions. This vote of confidence in the staff energized the change significantly.

An important factor which shook the organization out of the past was the economic recession and the imposition by council of a "user pay" policy.

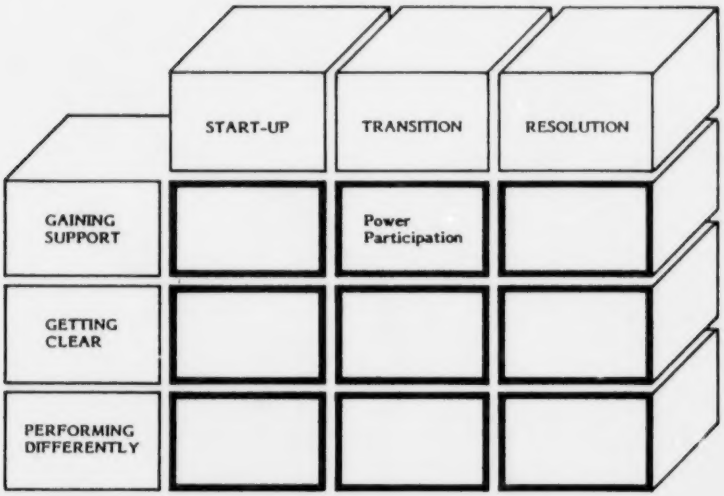
A staff training committee was used instead of a transition team. They were charged with planning the learning required by staff to implement the change. Because the training was so closely related to the change, this committee in many ways functioned as a transition team. It was made up of staff from all three levels of the organization. The director no longer sits on the committee. Presently, the committee is chaired by a member of the programme staff. The democratic basis of this committee is an important symbol of the intent and direction of the change.

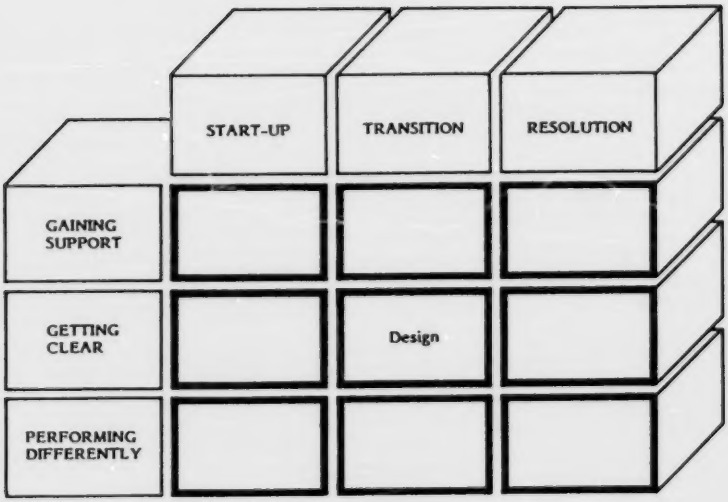
The role of the commissioner has been an important but "arm's length" one. He has supported the change from the beginning but has intervened only in times of difficulty.

TRANSITION/GAINING SUPPORT

When people are faced with major change without an opportunity to influence it they either retreat into nostalgia or into a bitter cynicism about the present. Neither is a prescription for developing committment. Gaining suport in the transition phase is a delicate balance of attaining sufficient power to protect the essence of the change and being able to diffuse power and allow others to influence the direction of the change.

The best vehicle for structuring this kind of participative process is a transition team. The team is made up of the change managers and representatives from various constituencies and it is charged with managing the change and the organization throughout this period. Generally, this team becomes a focus of resistance to change. Although the ensuing conflict may not be pleasant, it is crucial to the success of the change that the issues raised by dissentors are addressed and resolved.




START-UP
TRANSITION
RESOLUTION
GAINING SUPPORT
GETTING CLEAR
Design
PERFORMING DIFFERENTLY

TRANSITION/GETTING CLEAR

Clarity at this stage is what is typically thought of as design. Design takes the vision and diagnosis from the previous stage and converts them into clear goals and structures for achieving those goals. For example, the design of a change in one municipality included new goals, new reporting relationships, a performance appraisal system, a series of training events and a new approach to serving a particular group of clients. Good design combines intuition and rational analysis and results in well-supported, new approaches. This section will specify the design tasks normaliy facing recreation departments, describe a process for doing this work, and discuss criteria for good design.

a) **Basic Design Tasks in Changing Recreation Organizations:**

1) **Goals** - What are the goals that emerge from your formulation of the diagnosis and the vision? What do these goals mean to the clients, politicians, staff?

2) **Governance** - How will the decisons be made and by whom? What mechanisms are there for power sharing and participation by staff or community groups? What mechanisms for resolving conflicts?

3) **Structure** - How will the work be divided up? What sections will there be? What work responsibilities will each person have? Will this be a decentralized system or a centralized one? How will groups work laterally across the organization? What groups or meetings will there be?

4) **Culture** - How will the organization "feel" - Business-like? Informal? Easy going? Socially conscious? How will the formal and informal reward system work to support the climate you want? What is the organization truly about?

NEPEAN

There is wide agreement on most of these dimensions at Nepean but the change process paid most attention to what was most important to the participants.

Early in the transition stage there was an exhaustive goals and objectives process.

The participation approach to governance is a central aspect of the change which has received detailed consideration. There is a complex network of committees and project teams that "run" Nepean.

The structure is an informal matrix. Supervisors head up program-related structures such as aquatics, sports, etc. but each supervisor is also responsible for community development in a particular area of the city. Programs are often run by project teams made up of staff from different sections.

5) **Organizational Assessment** - How will the organization learn? What mechanisms should there be to provide feedback both on internal organization and external effectiveness?

6) **Support system** - What provision has been made for individual learning, training retreats, stress reduction? Who should co-ordinate this?

7) **Program system** - What will be the program emphasis? How will the department innovate? How will the needs of a diverse population be met? How will the program fit with the physical facilities? How will program and staff be evaluated?

8) **Environmental Links** - What mechanisms will link the organization with its community, various voluntary organizations, other recreation departments?

Most organizations have many of these elements in place and organizational change is only going to deal with a sub-set of them, however it is important to remember the old maxim that change in one part of the system results in change in other parts. So if you are re-designing the goals of the organization, be aware that this will probably require attention to most of the other areas as well. (The above list is adapted from, Taylor, B., Mapping New Schools, Center for Policy Research, New York, 1978.)

b) **The Design Process**

The actual process of design is a little understood art. Because design is generally a collaborative activity, what is needed is a "plan for planning" so that people will know where they are in the process and that important steps are not omitted. The 5 steps in the design process are listed in the traditional order although they may occur in any sequence. What is important, however, is that the group members work on the same step at any given time.

NEPEAN

The design process at Nepean has been informal and on-going instead of the once-and-for-all approach seen in many organizations. It started with intensive study, a goals and objectives process, and continued with an on-going analysis of experience at staff meetings and training workshops. The key to the success of the process has been meticulous concern for communication, involvement and training.

Basic Design Steps:

1) **Translate the diagnosis and vision** into a set of change goals. Try to keep the list short, more than five goals is akin to having no goals.

2) **Generate a number of possible designs.** This is often given but seldom taken advice. The temptation is to spend time enhancing personal solutions. A key stage in the life of a design team is when individuals begin to let go of their preconceived notions and deal with the whole problem -- not just the part of that fits their solution.

3) **Select ideas.** At this stage how the ideas fit together is unclear. The important questions are - What do we like? What sems to make sense?

4) **Weave the ideas into a coherent design.** Any given problem has multiple causes. The more varied the solutions, the better. They must however, fit together, be coherent and take care of the loose ends.

5) **Evaluate the design.** This is the stage which protects you from the enthusiastic but sometimes limited view of the design team. Does your design respond to the goals? Are there loose ends? Is your design likely to be politically acceptable? Consultation is an important step here.

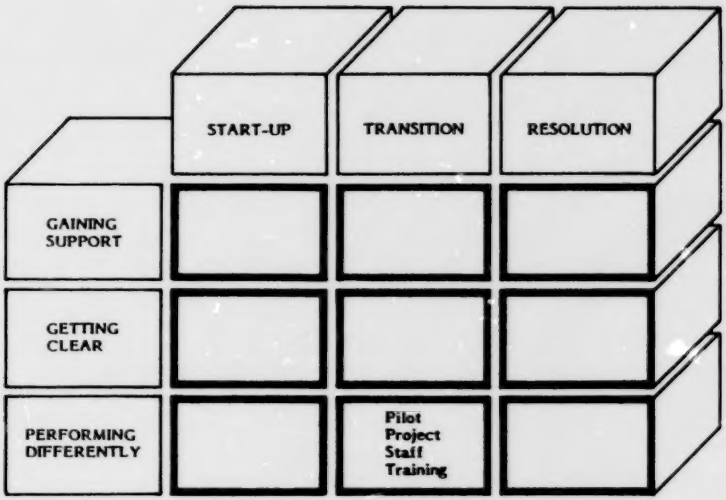
c) What are the elements of successful designs? The following characteristics separate the winners from the losers:

1) **Information** - The best designs are a result of careful data collection prior to design work.

2) **Coherence** - They make sense to a broad group of people but more importantly they don't have loose ends. For example, are these new employees in the union? Will the training be paid for by the city or by the individuals?

NEPEAN

One of the reasons Nepean has been allowed an apparently radical, participative, community development approach is that it pays attention to important norms. Along with community development it continues to provide innovative and popular programs, run the division within budget, and not make waves for the rest of the system when working with communities.



3) **Responsiveness** - The best designs recognize and deal with the problems raised by all the important actors.

4) **Informal climate on the design team** - The teams that function formally, with each person representing a particular constituency, never get unhooked from the solutions they bring into the team. The process becomes one of negotiation not creation.

5) **Attention to system norms** - Every system has near inviolate rules. (specific council decisions, the collective agrement, the job classification system) Designs that violate such norms in an excess of designer zeal and creative excitement, live to regret it.

Design is an act performed by human beings in the hope of influencing other human beings. Therefore, good design pays scrupulous attention to the human dynamics of the process.

This section has attempted to present straightforward advice on the organizational design process. The main ideas are - the importance of clear goals, wide acceptance, coherence and a process that pays attention to human dynamics.

TRANSITION/PERFORMING DIFFERENTLY

The task of performing differently at the transition stage is concerned with designing and managing pilot projects to illuminate how the change works in practice. Actually trying it out on a small scale provides an opportunity to test the change in the real world and understand how it works in the hands of those who may not have been as closely involved in its design. It is important to point out that, although small-scale, these are "real" events with risks of failure and rewards for success. A well-planned evaluation is required in order to maximize learning from the project.

Beckhard discusses evaluation of change extensively in his book, Organizational Transitions. He defines evaluation as,

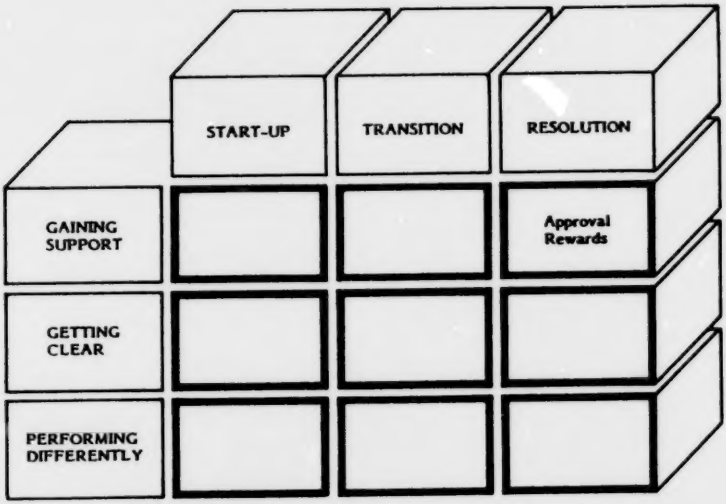
> "that set of planned, information gathering and analysis activities undertaken to provide . . . a satisfactory assessment of the effects and/or progress of the change effort."[5]

NEPEAN

Nepean did not attempt a small scale pilot project before implementing community development. Instead, they implemented it city-wide but did so quite tentatively. Using the supervisors instead of full-time community workers ensured a safer, slower implementation.

Although the division is learning from their experience, a well-designed evaluation would have provided them with better information and would have energized this aspect of the change.

In order to prepare staff for community development, Nepean instituted team-building training which built relationships across the divisions. The learning continued as staff were encouraged to work together developing inter-divisional programs.



He recommends developing a plan which includes the purpose of the evaluation, the kind of information to be collected, the means of collecting it and a schedule for gathering and analyzing data.

Bearing in mind that information is power, it is reasonable to expect considerable organizational conflict over issues such as - Who evaluates? What questions will be asked? How will the data be anlyzed? The same careful attention paid to involvement and participation at the design stage must be continued here if the evaluation is going to be acceptable and believable to all.

The transition stage is also the stage when it is important to intensify training efforts. Although learning should be happenning at all stages of the process, it is at this stage the learning requirements become more pressing. Staff are taking on new roles and are grappling with what the change will mean in practice.

RESOLUTION

The final stage is often begun by council or board approval of the structural aspects of the change and is characterized by working to make the change a reality. The problem which led to change may not be resolved but at least solutions are in place. The change is becoming part of "the way things are around here".

Successful resolution results in three things:

1) new structures, staff and reporting relationships in place.

2) acceptance of the change by staff, managers, council and community.

3) decrease in confusion.

NEPEAN

Much of the political work in the Nepean change was accomplished at start-up by utilizing a group of consultants to involve the recreation committee in an extensive planning process which resulted in a highly authoritative report. This report established the legitimacy of the new goals.

The structural changes requiring council approval were done incrementally over a number of years. These comparatively minor changes (collapsing a section, re-classification of staff) were done without a significant increase in budget.

The political process at Nepean is sufficiently informal that it allows regular contact between staff and recreation committee members. This committee, made up of aldermen and community people is an important link between council and staff.

One of the unexpected aspects of the change was the stress and overwork associated with delivering regular program, responding to communities and working on project teams. Staff concern with this issue has resulted in a Work Study committee which is finding ways to improve this situation.

In a recent study, the overwhelming majority of the staff at Nepean felt that they had sufficient influence and freedom but only occasionally rewards went to those who deserved them.

RESOLUTION/GETTING SUPPORT

Gaining council approval for the change is a key task of resolution. Gaining approval is different from other tasks in that political considerations usually outweigh administrative/professional ones. Golembiewski[6] distinguishes between what he sees as the two orientations - one seeks truth by asking the technocratic question, "will it work?" . . . while the political orientations asks, "will this be supported?" It is not a simple distinction because both managers and politicians use a mixture of both orientations.

Managers often disparage the "political" process and don't develop the skills required to help council deal with changes. The importance of an on-going relationship with the politicians cannot be over-emphasized. Other factors enhancing the possibility of passage are: union support, little extra cost, clear presentation, fair treatment of staff, agreement of relevant senior managers and a willingness to deal with the realities faced by powerful politicians.

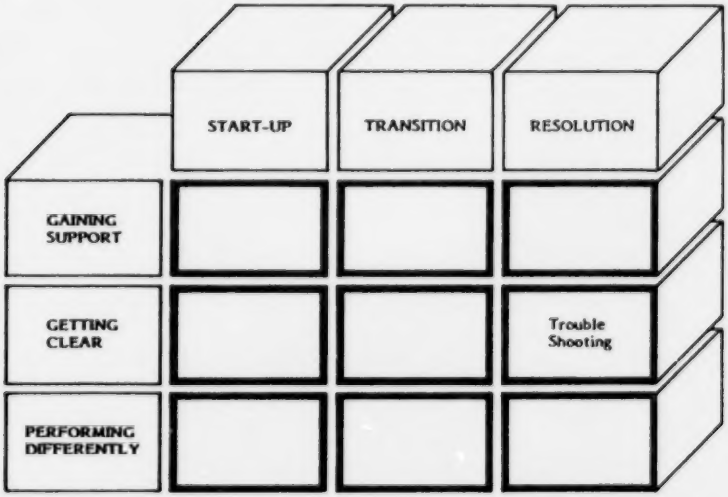
Getting support at the resolution stage is also related to allowing people continued influence over the change as it is implemented. It is best to retain the transition team throughout this stage as a vehicle for staying in touch with staff and alert to problems.

Many managers believe in the importance of extrinsic rewards such as promotion for supporters of the change. However, public service managers are often limited in the rewards they can obtain for staff and the distribution of rewards is often viewed negatively. Perhaps the most important rewards are associated with being an influential member of a high performing organization.

NEPEAN

One of the learnings gleaned from implementation was that the new ways of working were influencing the work of other divisions in the Parks and Recreation Department. Accordingly, a workshop is being planned to bring together staff from all divisions to look at the specifics of how community development will work and how it will influence other divisions.

Project teams and joint programming requires functioning outside the traditional hierarchy. This means that conflict can no longer be resolved simply by asking the boss. The staff training committee has run a workshop on conflict resolution and staff are currently experimenting with new approaches.



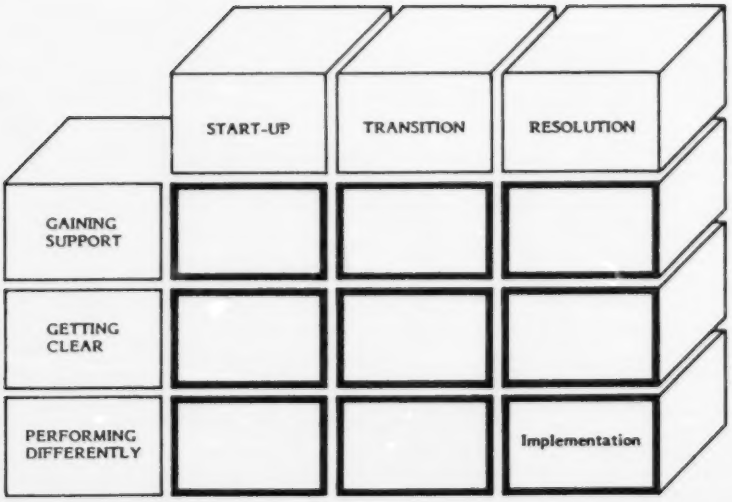
RESOLUTION/GETTING CLEAR

The resolution stage is the time when a crystal clear idea may come unraveled and complicated as people who were not intimately involved in the planning become responsible for making the change work in the real world. The specific tasks at this stage are trouble-shooting and re-design.

This process requires the same attention to involvement and power-sharing as the original design process. It is easy to forget that you have lived with this plan for a year or more; others have to go through a similar process of trying out the change and influencing its direction.

NEPEAN

Nepean has implemented a city-wide community development program, inter-divisional programming and significant democratization of staff relations. The implementation has been done with less than usual chaos but it has been done over a period of 4 years with careful monitoring by all levels of staff and the staff training committee.



RESOLUTION/PERFORMING DIFFERENTLY

In a large scale change, implementation is a battle between order and chaos. It means translating an approved design into a functioning organization. Implementation has to do with actually starting community development, hiring or transfering people, setting up a new office, training, finding new space, etc.

Implementation also has to cope with design flaws in the original plan and possibly, low staff acceptance. The less time taken to implement the higher the need for careful planning, attention to detail and yet more monitoring.

Success in implementation results largely from previous work (acceptance of staff, competent design, etc.).

Implementation has its own requirements for success though. The key tasks here are:

1) **careful planning** - specifying as much as possible who is responsible for what on which schedules.

2) **support for staff struggling with new roles,** responsibilities and relationships.

3) **training** in new skills.

4) **wide-spread discussion** of the effects of the change.

5) **re-design** to respond to problems.

6) **high profile management** which ties all the pieces together and models the change leadership behavior expected of staff.

This section has described the texture of the three tasks as they are perfomed across the three stages of organizational change. Perhaps the central message is that organizational change is "for keeps". It is a serious effort to make the lives of staff and clients different in some way. Change will always result in more or less conflict. The issue is to find equitable and competent ways of managing that conflict on the way to more effective, human organizations.

SUMMARY - NEPEAN

In the past seven years Nepean has changed significant aspects of its structure, process and program. It has not been imposed from the top but developed collaboratively, resulting in unanimous support of the staff. Scrupulous attention was paid to each of the stages of change ensuring sufficient clarity and support at each step. Clarity came from thorough study at the beginning and intensive training throughout. Political support was generated by a series of authoritative studies. Staff support was built by the sensitive pacing of the change and the constant attention to the dynamics of participation. The decisive factor, however, has been the commitment of the staff to innovation and learning.

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